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THE

WEST POINT CENTENNIAL.

HISTORIC ORATION.

BY

MAJOR HENRY C. DANE,

OF BOSTON, MASS.

NEW YORK:

G. W. Carleton & Co., Publishers.

LONDON: S. LOW & CO.

1878.

THE

WEST POINT CENTENNIAL.

HISTORIC ORATION,

DELIVERED AT THE DECORATION OF THE GRAVES OF THE IMMORTAL HEROES WHO LIE IN THE NATIONAL CEMETERY AT THAT MEMORABLE POST, ON DECORATION DAY, MAY 30, 1878.

BY

MAJOR HENRY C. DANE,

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Trow's
Printing and Bookbinding Co.,
205-213 *East 12th St.*,
New York.

To

The Immortal Dead!

AND

The Illustrious Living!

WHO HAVE GONE OUT FROM OUR MILITARY ACADEMY

AT WEST POINT,

AND

BY THEIR STEADFAST LOYALTY!

UNSWERVING FIDELITY!

AND HEROIC SACRIFICES!

HAVE INSCRIBED THEIR NAMES

UPON THE HEARTS OF THEIR COUNTRYMEN;

AS A FEEBLE TRIBUTE OF JUSTICE,

THIS ORATION

Is Humbly Dedicated.

DECORATIVE SERVICES

AT THE

WEST POINT CEMETERY.

EARLY in the season, "George Washington Camp No. 1, United States War Veterans," a new organization, composed of veterans of all our wars, considered the propriety of visiting West Point and decorating the graves of the officers and soldiers who are buried in the National Cemetery at that Post—a spot hitherto neglected. To apprise the Commandant of the Post and obtain the proper permission, the following letter was addressed to Major-General Schofield, commanding:

219 EAST THIRTY-SIXTH STREET,
NEW YORK, March 18, 1878.

Major-General JOHN M. SCHOFIELD, *commanding United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.:*

SIR—The Society of United States War Veterans has, by resolution, delegated to me the pleasing duty of soliciting from you permission to decorate with flowers, on Decoration Day, May 30th, the graves of Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott and other gallant soldiers whose remains are now deposited in the National Cemetery at West Point. By way of explanation I would respectfully state, sir, that the society of which I have the honor to be president is composed entirely of those who have been regularly mustered into service and honorably discharged during some one of the wars in which the government of the United States has been engaged, treason against the government being the only bar to membership. In the main, sir, our ranks are filled by veterans of the Mexican War and the late rebellion. In the past, on Decoration Day, as members of other societies, we have taken part in the solemn services observed in the immediate vicinity of this metropolis. This year, with your kind permission, in our new organization, we propose to charter a steamer and visit a hitherto neglected, but most sacred spot, and there, by an oration and the strewing of flowers, add our mite to the honoring of names that have been

rendered immortal in the history of our common country. I need only add, sir, that our proceedings will be conducted in such a manner as will reflect no discredit upon the fair fame of those we wish to pay this tribute to, or upon their surviving comrades, which we have the high honor to be.

Awaiting your reply, sir, in behalf of my brother members, I have the honor to subscribe myself your obedient servant,

JAMES M. TURNER,
President United States War Veterans.

To this communication the following prompt reply was received:

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF WEST POINT,
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY,
WEST POINT, N. Y., March 19, 1878.

Colonel JAMES M. TURNER, *No.* 219 *East Thirty-sixth Street, New York City:*

SIR—I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 18th inst., asking permission for your "Society of the United States War Veterans" to visit West Point and decorate the graves of Generals Scott, Custer, and others, buried in the West Point Cemetery, on "Decoration Day," the 30th of May next, and to inform you that your request is granted. Your steamer will be permitted to land her passengers at the South dock.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

J. M. SCHOFIELD,
Major-General Commanding.

Upon the reception of General Schofield's letter, the Camp passed a resolution instructing the president to procure an orator for the occasion. Thereupon a letter was addressed to Major H. C. Dane, of Boston, inviting him to fill that position, and in due season his acceptance was received. To complete the arrangements, the steamer "Sylvan Dell" was chartered, a band engaged, and the relatives and friends of the dead whose graves were to be decorated, with many distinguished army officers and citizens, invited to be present.

On Decoration Day, notwithstanding a violent storm prevailed, the Camp, with numerous invited guests, embarked on their steamer and went to West Point, and decorated the graves of all the officers and privates, who had served on battle-fields.

When the general decoration was over, the Camp formed in front of General Scott's monument, and proceeded with their special services. The band played a dirge, then the Camp Chaplain, Rev. W. R. Connelly, made an eloquent prayer,

such as the time and place could not fail to inspire, after which, four officers of the Camp, each having a basket of cut flowers, stepped out from the ranks and to the grave, successively, and having repeated their respective parts of the beautiful service, scattered the flowers over the sacred dust, "to their immortal memory."

Then the entire Camp formed in single file, and, headed by the Commander, marched around the grave, each one, stopping in front of the monument, and dropped a bouquet, saying at the same time: "This to our comrades; peace to their ashes!" This closed the services of the Camp, and as the rain was falling in torrents, it was decided not to attempt to deliver the oration at the graves.

The column then marched to the house of Major-General Schofield, halted on the sidewalk and faced his door. The General immediately appeared on his piazza, when Colonel Turner, approaching him, explained the objects and purposes of the Camp as an association, and, in the presence of the comrades and friends, invested him with the Camp badge, which was received with a few very spirited and patriotic words.

The column then marched to the dock and re-embarked, and proceeded down the river, having faithfully performed their duty towards those who have won the deepest gratitude of their nation—the lack of which is next to crime.

When under way, the company assembled on both decks, at the after-part of the boat, and the orator of the day, standing on the companion stairway, proceeded to deliver the following oration:

ORATION.

MR. PRESIDENT, OFFICERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY, COMRADES, AND FRIENDS:

The occasion that brings us together at this time and place is one of peculiar interest and import. A nation mourns and honors her noble dead; a grateful people turn from their busy walks of life, to pay universal tribute to the memories of their loved ones, who willingly sacrificed their lives for their country's safety and honor.

The custom of decorating the graves of heroes is no new one; it began far back in the annals of heroic deeds. The use of flowers to note the honor due to those who gave their lives in a noble cause is as old as fame.

The Greeks and Romans early conceived the propriety of crowning those of their generals, who had been signally victorious, with leaves and flowers, in the presence of their armies, whose souls were aroused to higher devotion when they saw the fragrant wreaths placed upon the heads of their proud commanders. In this custom the Romans were particularly generous, and they made marked distinction in their bestowal of these rewards.

Whenever any of their cities had been besieged, and a general, by his superior tactics and valor, had relieved the beleaguered place, and released its citizens, they immediately gathered the flowers, leaves, and even weeds of the captured place, and, weaving them into a wreath or crown, in the presence of all the army and people, placed it upon the head of the conqueror as a *Corona Graminæ Obsidionalis*, or "crown of the herbs from the siege."

Any soldier who, by great personal courage, had succeeded in saving the life of a comrade, at the risk of his own, was presented with the *Corona Civica*, a wreath of oak leaves.

To the commanding general, who had won a great battle in

the open field, was awarded the *Corona Triumphalis*, or laurel wreath; while at the same time the subordinate generals received the *Corona Ovalis*, or myrtle wreath; and to the officers of line and privates were given *Coronæ Oliaginæ*, or olive wreaths.

From this custom of rewarding the living with floral offerings, they soon adopted the further and more sublime custom of meeting at the graves of their dead heroes, on the anniversaries of their fall, and, after recounting their deeds of valor, decking their urns with leaves and flowers.

In this custom the Greeks were very active. They extended the offerings to their dead philosophers, poets, and warriors alike.

The early Christians, when the great persecution and reign of martyrdom transpired, between the years 160 and 200, borrowed the beautiful custom even from their very enemies and persecutors, and practised it with marked sublimity.

That they might the more effectually excite the survivors to heroic deeds, to firmer fidelity, and to manly defence of their faith and rights, they met at their martyrs' graves, on the anniversaries of their death, which they called their "days of nativity!" or "birth-days into heaven!" and, having offered up their prayers, they read and expounded a portion of Scripture, and then related the heroic deeds of their dead, and sought by these means to excite their fellows to emulate the courage and fortitude of the departed. They then scattered flowers over the ashes of their saints, and, singing a psalm, retired quietly, and often stealthily, to their homes and hiding-places in the mountains and dark ravines.

And, my comrades and friends, we have met to continue the custom founded so long ago by the Greeks and Romans, and consecrated by the earliest Christians with the blood of their martyrs, by scattering our floral offerings over the sacred dust of our well-beloved heroes.

With us the custom has become the grandest spectacle the world ever witnessed. It was left for the Republic of America to gather all the customs of the past, and unite them in one universal observance throughout all the land.

And to-day, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Lakes to the Gulf, every American, loyal to his flag and country, has laid aside all business, all cares, all other thoughts, to assemble

around the graves of the Nation's dead, there to recount their heroic deeds, and to express their sorrowing remembrance, by scattering the emblems of peace, joy, and purity over the ashes of those whose blood was poured out to establish, protect, and preserve this Union and Republic.

And to-day, as its first public act, George Washington Camp, No. 1, United States War Veterans, with its friends, comes to this sacred spot, to decorate, for the first time, these precious graves, where some of the noblest of the land sleep in the National heart.

What a time! what a place! is this on which we stand! As we look about, what memories come in upon the mind, overwhelming it with unutterable emotions! What a theatre has this ground been!

West Point!—one of the most important points on the continent; memorable for events and histories that must live while mankind shall honor and respect heroic deeds and stern patriotism; hallowed by the footsteps of men whose names stand out as the Fathers of the Republic; the bulwark that saved the colonists in their struggle for Liberty and National existence; the fountain from which has and will come the skill, courage, and fidelity, to protect and preserve intact the Union and the Republic as the Fathers left them.

Standing here to-day, amid these scenes, and over the illustrious dead who fell in the wars of Independence, 1812, Florida, Mexico, and the Rebellion, as well as those who gave their lives in defence of our frontiers against the savages of the forests, it seems fitting that we should pause for a moment, and consider the *place* as well as the day.

Here Washington had his headquarters for a time, during the darkest of those "days that tried men's souls;" here the knightly Kosciusko wrought out his plans, and left the imprint of his patriotic genius; here Lafayette, Rochambeau, Green, Knox, Gates, Putnam, Stirling, and a long list of those who counted life cheap in defence of Liberty, counselled in those days when doubts and fears seemed to whisper from every branch and bush.

Fitly secluded for retirement and study, adorned by nature with everything calculated to please the eye, elevate the soul, and inspire it with patriotic emotion, it was properly selected by the nation and consecrated to the severe training of her

sons in military science and patriotic devotion to her in all perils.

The importance of the Highlands, in a military point of view, very early attracted the attention of the colonists; and on the 30th of May, 1775, the Provincial Congress of New York passed an order appointing Colonel James Clinton and a Mr. Tappan as a committee, with power to call in the assistance of others, to go to the Highlands and select favorable points for fortifications. In June that committee made a report, suggesting the erection of a fort on the island opposite, and two others, six miles below, on the west bank, at Pollopon's Creek. In August the construction of those works was ordered, and, on the 29th of that month, Fort Constitution was begun on the island still bearing that name. In November, the same Congress appointed Robert J. Livingston, Robert Treat Paine, and J. Langdon a committee "to take an accurate view of our fortifications on Hudson's River, and report regarding their progress." In the same month the committee made their report, in which they said: "The grounds on the West Point are the best for fortifications, and we recommend that a fort be erected thereon." That was the first official recommendation to occupy West Point.

Early in 1776, Lord Stirling, Colonel Putnam, and Colonel Knox were sent, at the request of Washington, to examine the works, and in June, Lord Stirling made the report to Washington, in which he said: "The West Point ought to be fortified."

Matters had now become very active. The works were progressing rapidly, and the Highlands were becoming of the utmost importance to both armies. Early in July, immediately after the Declaration of Independence, General George Clinton, brother of the Colonel, occupied Fort Constitution, then in progress, and garrisoned it.

All the works were pushed forward vigorously, until Forts Constitution, Montgomery, Clinton, and Independence, just below Anthony's Nose, and the works at Stony Point, with minor batteries, were completed.

In October, 1777, the enemy attacked the works, capturing Stony Point, and Forts Montgomery and Clinton, and forcing the evacuation of Independence and Constitution. They immediately demolished Forts Montgomery and Constitution,

and began the repair of Fort Clinton, preparatory to fortifying the Highlands on a new basis, as soon as their southern army should make a connection with Burgoyne's on the north. But, as Burgoyne surrendered his army twenty days later, they left and sought safer quarters.

Soon after the disaster at Stony Point, Washington wrote to General Putnam concerning the great importance of refortifying the river at once. "Seize the present opportunity," he said, "and employ your whole force, and all the means in your power, for erecting and completing, as far as it shall be possible, such works and obstructions as may be necessary to defend and secure the river against any future attempts of the enemy."

He also wrote to Governor Clinton particularly regarding this subject, which he esteemed of the most vital importance; and in reply the Governor wrote, saying: "A strong fortress should be erected on the West Point, opposite to Fort Constitution."

This West Point stood out in the eyes of all as the one important position. But so much controversy arose as to where and how the works should be rebuilt, that about the beginning of January, 1778, the whole ground was examined by General Putnam, Governor Clinton, General James Clinton, and several other gentlemen, among whom was Colonel Radiere, the French engineer, and they all, except Colonel Radiere, united in the opinion that West Point was the most eligible place to fortify. Radiere opposed the decision, and drew up a report designed to show that the site of Fort Clinton, six miles below, possessed much superior advantages. As the engineer was a man of science, and had the confidence of Congress and the Commander-in-chief, General Putnam deemed it expedient to consult the Council and Assembly of New York before he came to a final conclusion.

Another committee was appointed, which spent several days in examining the banks of the river in the Highlands, and then reported unanimously in favor of West Point as the chief site.

In the meantime, the voice of Washington, from among his suffering troops at Valley Forge, was appealing to General Putnam to push the work on the Hudson.

In February, Putnam wrote to him that the work was pro-

ceeding with all speed, and that " the chain and anchors were contracted for and would probably be ready by April 1st." He also spoke of a new fort that was in rapid progress, which without doubt was the one where Fort Clinton now is.

Colonel Radiere, the engineer who began the work, not being in sympathy with the selection of the site, failed to enter into it with that energy and devotion the occasion required, and was early removed—Kosciusko, the young Pole who had come to cast his lot with the Colonists, being appointed in his place in March.

From that time the work of fortification went rapidly forward. Fort Putnam, now a ruin on yonder hill-top, and the fort on the point, were begun in January, and that on the point completed in May, 1778, one hundred years ago, *giving us the distinguished honor of celebrating its centennial by decorating the monument of its engineer.*

In July, 1779, Washington arrived here, and established his headquarters in Moore's house, in the quiet valley below the cemetery, which still bears his illustrious name.

West Point was then the centre of the army, with General McDougall in immediate command—the right extending into Connecticut, under command of General Putnam, and the left in the Highlands under General Heath.

What a post! and what an army! The English had long before denominated it the " Gibraltar of America;" and here mustered the Spartan band to defend it against the strongest power on earth!

In 1780, still more important events transpired at this post. A general in command, whose name had been honored by the first fort erected here, and who was known as one of the most recklessly brave men in the army, smarting under what he deemed an unjust sting, and overmastered by vanity and wounded pride, attempted to engraft treason upon the sacred walls of West Point! The story is too well known to be recalled.

Interesting as these points of history are, there are others of far deeper interest and importance to us and the American people, and those relate directly to the Military Academy established here. And on this important occasion it seems highly proper that we should give a few moments' special attention to its history and relation to the Government and the people.

The first official suggestion of establishing an academy for military training at this post was due to Colonel Pickering, then Quartermaster-General of the army, and was made as early as April, 1783. The war was over, and the questions, as to what should be done with the army, and how it should be established on a peace basis, came prominently before Congress and the people.

Washington and his coadjutors in the war of the Revolution had been forcibly impressed with the need and importance of thorough military instruction. The subject called forth the opinions of many of the leading officers, and regarding it Colonel Pickering said: "If anything like a military academy in America be practicable at this time, it must be grounded on the permanent military establishment for our frontier posts and arsenals, and the wants of the States, separately, of officers to command defences on their sea-coasts. On this principle it might be expedient to establish a military school or academy at West Point."

The matter was discussed in and out of Congress for several years, but with no results towards its establishment.

Early in January, 1790, General Knox, then Secretary of War, at the request of Washington, drew up a detailed plan for a peace army, in which he said: "If the United States possess the vigor of mind to establish a military academy, it may be reasonably expected to produce the most unequivocal advantages. By it a glorious national spirit will be introduced, with its extensive train of political consequences."

Washington laid the matter before Congress, urging its adoption, but it was some years before that body took any steps in this important matter. Both houses seemed to have fears of such an institution. Still Congress saw the need of some kind of an army, and in 1792 it passed an act establishing an uniform militia throughout the United States, but made no provisions for military instruction.

In his annual message of 1793, Washington suggested the inquiry whether the act fully accomplished its objects, and whether a material feature of the scheme of military defence ought not to be, "to afford an opportunity for the study of those branches of the art which can scarcely ever be attained by practice alone." But Congress took no further action upon the matter.

In his last message, in 1796, Washington again presented the subject to Congress, in more explicit terms, in these significant words: "The institution of a military academy is also recommended by cogent reasons. However pacific the general policy of a nation may be, it ought never to be without an adequate stock of military knowledge for emergencies. The first would impair the energy of its character, and both would hazard its safety, or expose it to greater evils, when war could not be avoided. Besides, that war might not depend upon its own choice. In proportion as the observance of pacific maxims might exempt a nation from the necessity of practising the rules of the military art, ought to be its care in preserving and transmitting, by proper establishments, the knowledge of that art. Whatever arguments may be drawn from particular examples superficially reviewed, a thorough examination of the subject will evince that the art of war is both comprehensive and complicated; that it demands much previous study; and that the possession of it, in its most improved and perfect state, is always of great moment to the security of a nation. This, therefore, ought to be a serious care of every government; and for this purpose, an academy, where a regular course of instruction is given, is an obvious expedient, which different nations have successfully employed."

Prophetic words! How fully they were illustrated when the whirlwind of rebellion swept over our land!

The discussion of the matter now became general and earnest, and strong efforts were made to pass a bill to establish an academy during 1800 and 1801, but the prejudice was still so powerful they all failed.

At last, however, a bill was reported to Congress, and passed March 16, 1802, fixing the military establishment of the United States, and providing for the establishment of a military academy, and locating it at West Point; and on yonder plain we behold the result.

On yonder plain! The results of that act cover a much broader field than that circumscribed by those towering hills and that majestic river!

Look on those monuments rising above the noble dust beneath! Go traverse the plains of Mexico; go thread the swamps of Florida; go stand on the shores of the Northern lakes; go follow the dark paths of the Western wilderness;

go gaze upon the fields of the South ; beneath all those blood-stained sods lie the fruits of that act, in the mouldering forms of the sons who have gone out from those halls, to serve their country and die in her defence and for her glory !

Those monuments attest the loyalty and devotion of West Point to the flag ; and the hundreds of thousands of green mounds on every hill-side, and in every valley, over which sad hearts scatter flowers this day, testify to the readiness of the people to gather around and follow West Point to victory or to death in the defence of the Union and the Republic, as they were, as they are, and as they shall remain !

And whatever we say of West Point, we must with equal justice say of our Naval Academy at Annapolis.

West Point has never been properly and fully appreciated by the people. There has been, and still is, a strong prejudice in the popular mind against this Academy, based more upon ignorance than upon good reason. Nay, more : justice demands it be said that it rests entirely upon ignorance, or a want of true patriotism.

The country is much more indebted to the Military Academy than is generally supposed. In the war of 1812 the influence of this institution, then but ten years old, had much to do with the decided results of that conflict. The young and gallant officers, going out from the Academy, carried that "previous study of those branches of the art of war which can scarcely ever be attained by practice alone," which, added to the experience of older officers, aided materially in producing those armies that drove England from these shores the second time.

And of the sixty-five officers who went from West Point, nine were killed on the field ; one-fourth were wounded, and one-fifth received brevets for gallantry.

It is a conceded fact that, in all of our wars with the Indians, the West Point graduates have always shown a skill and courage unequalled by any other men. In the North, South, or West, they have always met the red men to whip them or die in the attempt.

In the Florida war this spirit was fully exemplified, where ten of the West Point officers fell, eight of them at the same time and place ; and yonder silent marble, standing where all who journey along that noble river may behold it—silent, yet

speaking with sublime eloquence—tells in a word their story: "DADE AND HIS COMMAND!"

On their way to relieve an endangered post, they were surprised and slaughtered by an overwhelming band of savages. And they were found, when months had passed, lying where they had stood—dead in their tracks! *every man accounted for!* And at their grave their comrades planted the only cannon they had, where, it is to be hoped, it still stands—a fitting monument for noble dead—forever silent as the hearts that served it!

In Mexico, West Point won a position in the military world the nation may well be proud of. In the annals of warfare those campaigns stand out unique and unequalled for hard-fought battles and brilliant victories. In a malarious climate, under a tropic sun in summer, in the intense cold of mountain tops in winter, suffering incredible hardships and privations, with an army of eighty thousand men, we fought a nation of eight millions, having an army five times as large, well officered and equipped, and in less than a year and a half won forty-eight victories, captured forty thousand soldiers, took a thousand cannon, and an immense amount of small arms and munitions of war; carried ten strongly fortified places, and the enemy's capital, and extended our conquests over vast territories without a single defeat!

There was the "Army of the West" under General Stephen W. Kearny, where a Corporal's guard raised the Stars and Stripes over the richest country in the world—and then held it!

There was the "Army of Occupation," under General Taylor, which occupied everything it came to, and gave up nothing. Its dazzling record was written at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey, and Buena Vista!

And then there was "The Army" which might properly be called "The Grand Army," under the great chieftain who sleeps at our feet! What a record was theirs, as they made that unequalled march through an almost unbroken and impenetrable line of fortifications, defended by overwhelming numbers, of which Santa Anna had said: "In every defile of these mountains they will find a Thermopylæ."

Scott threw his invincible army against the stronghold of Vera Cruz, before whose steel it crumbled and fell, to the

amazement of the enemy, and then on for the Capital. The thrilling story is told in the memorable names: Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Churubusco, Molino del Rey, Chapultepec, and Puebla! Through all these the conquering hero cut his way, to the Berlin gate and into the proud city, until, like Saul of Israel, head and shoulders above all the people, he stood in the midst of his triumphant armies, and for his great success, thanked the God of Battles, in the halls of the Montezumas! Glorious spectacle! Glorious day for America! Glorious day for her army, and West Point!

The Commander-in-chief had fulfilled the prophecy of the great Wellington, who had said when Scott started for his campaign, that if he would adopt the plan he did, he would become one of the greatest generals of the age.

The marvellous successes of our armies on those fields is accounted for by the fact that the Military Academy had over *five hundred* educated graduates in service, and nearly as many more in civil life, ready to buckle on sword, when the war broke out.

During the thirty years of lucrative peace after the war of 1812, the country had come to look upon our Military Academy as an almost useless expense; but in that war, the fruits of thorough military education were most apparent.

Touching this point, the immortal Scott, the one man best qualified to speak, when called before the United States Senate Committee in 1860, to testify regarding West Point Academy, said: "I give it as my fixed opinion, that but for our graduating cadets, the war between the United States and Mexico, might, and probably would, have lasted some four or five years, with, in its first half, more defeats than victories falling to our share; whereas, in less than two campaigns, we conquered a great country and a peace, without the loss of a single battle or a skirmish!"

But with all our victories there were dark sides to those campaigns. More than *twenty thousand* of our brave men sleep in Mexican soil, and besides scores of brave volunteer officers, many of the noblest sons of West Point fell on those plains. There were Cross and Lear, Burbour and Drum, Mills and Brown, Thornton and Field, Williams and Ransom, Scott and Ringgold, and many others, whose life and death added lustre to these halls, which resounded to their manly footsteps,

in the days of their hopeful youth, and glory to the nation for which they nobly died!

And when the great trial came—the trial that tested every nerve and sinew of the Republic—where stood West Point? What of the sons who went out from this *Alma Mater?* The day has come when the truth may be spoken without reserve. And standing within this sacred enclosure, justice seems to demand that it should be spoken; not only in behalf of the Military Academy, but more especially in behalf of the people.

West Point has been stigmatized as having been a hot-bed of treason, and opprobrious epithets have been hurled at it by demagogues as being false to the flag and ungrateful to the nation. By the ashes of her founders and her sons, let her record speak for her, without fear or favor.

When the rebellion broke out, there were *four hundred and twenty-five* graduates from the Academy, who had resigned and engaged in civil pursuits. Of these, *ninety-nine*—all but one being from the Southern States—joined the rebels, while *two hundred and eighty* remained loyal, and *forty-six* were unaccounted for.

There were at the same time *eight hundred and twenty* serving in the army; of these, *one hundred and eighty-four* resigned, and joined the rebels, and ten which took neither side, leaving *six hundred and twenty-six*, who stood firmly by the flag and the Union.

Of the *three hundred and thirty* graduates, born in, or appointed from Southern States, who were in the military service when the war broke out, *one hundred and sixty-two* remained loyal, and *one hundred and sixty-eight* went with the South, leaving nearly *one-half* standing by the stars and stripes; while *sixteen* from Northern States, turned their backs to their flag and duty, dishonoring their *Alma Mater*, and covering themselves with lasting shame.

Of the West Point graduates who served in the *five hundred* battles of the Rebellion, *one-fifth* laid down their lives, and nearly one-half were wounded in defence of the Union, and the remainder have every reason to be proud of their records of service.

The total number of cadets in the Academy, November 1, 1860, was *two hundred and seventy-eight*. Of these *eighty-six* were appointed from Southern States, of which *sixty-five* were

discharged, dismissed, or resigned from causes connected with the rebellion; leaving *twenty-one* from Southern States to prosecute their studies and graduate from the Academy.

What was the result of the training at Columbia, Princeton, Union, Yale, and great Harvard, under the shadows of Bunker Hill, or any other college in the land? And what was the record in the United States Senate and House of Representatives? The Southern sons, in and from those institutions, espoused the cause of secession almost to a man! while of the *three hundred and thirty* graduates, and *eighty-six* cadets, into whose minds the doctrine of "State Allegiance had been instilled for three generations," *one hundred and sixty-two* graduates, and *twenty-one* cadets, trained under the influences of West Point, battled bravely and firmly against secession, and no less bravely and firmly against every appeal of relatives and friends to swerve them from loyalty and duty.

Since its establishment, *five thousand eight hundred and seventeen* cadets have been admitted to the Academy; of this number, *two thousand seven hundred and sixteen* have graduated. They have represented their *Alma Mater* in *seven hundred and eighty-four* battles for the Union; they have filled every branch of the National service with talent, efficiency, and integrity; they have supplied the distinguished civil engineers, who have covered the face of our country with a network of railways, and furnished them with presidents, superintendents, and chief engineers. They have filled every State and national office with honor; they have represented our country at foreign courts with distinction; they have improved the mechanical and agricultural sciences; they have greatly elevated the scientific standard of most of the educational institutions, throughout our country, and furnished them with noted presidents, principals, and professors, and to-day twenty-eight graduates are in different institutions on special duty as army officers; they have improved our rivers, lakes, and harbors, constructed and armed our fortifications, surveyed and lighted our sea-coast, defined our boundaries, explored the length and breadth of our land, pioneered civilization into our new territories, and then protected it; and they have given to our militia and volunteers large numbers of valuable officers, and led them to the victories that saved the Union.

Where should we have been in the rebellion but for West

Point! What could our hundreds of thousands of loyal sons, who flocked from every hillside and valley, have done, but for the instruction West Point graduates were able and willing to give, and the gallant leadership of her sons who became so gloriously renowned as generals?

I am able to state, on the highest military authority, that, but for West Point and its influence, through standing so loyally by the Union, secession would have been an easily accomplished fact. Every rebel knows the truth of that. Those graduates from West Point, who went with the South, never expected to draw sabres!

It was the great body of graduates, standing true to duty, and leading and directing the hosts of the land, that saved the Union in our dire distress.

And I venture to predict—and I am confident I utter the opinion of the best minds of the land—that if this grand Republic ever goes to pieces, it will be because the people have neglected and deserted our Military and Naval Academies.

It has been charged, and generally believed, that the Military Academy is exclusive, and essentially aristocratic; that only the favored few could gain admittance, and that the appointments were kept largely within the families of the wealthy, and of army officers. The official records show quite a different fact. Of the five thousand eight hundred and seventeen cadets admitted to the academy, *four thousand seven hundred and sixty* were the sons of parents in moderate circumstances; *five hundred and seventy* of parents in reduced circumstances; *seventy-two* of indigent parents, and *three hundred and thirty-six* of independent parents. *Nine hundred and four* had no fathers, and *three hundred and thirty-one* with neither parent. *Fourteen hundred and three* were the sons of farmers and planters; *four hundred and twenty*, of mechanics; *seven hundred and eighty*, of lawyers and judges; *seven hundred and twenty-six* of merchants; *three hundred and sixty-four* of physicians; *seventy-three*, sons of hotel and boarding-house keepers; *one hundred and thirty*, of clergymen; *two hundred and seventy-two*, of Government officers; *six hundred and twenty-three*, of brokers, editors, etc.; and *five hundred and nineteen*, of army, navy, and volunteer officers; and there are several years of which I find no records. And when we consider that much less than one-half of the cadets admitted ever

graduate, it is easy to estimate the severity of the course of training, and discover that it requires not only a good brain, but also a sound, tough physique, to carry a cadet through. For the duties he meets with here are many, constant, and severe ; and only the very best he can do, all the time, will serve him, that he may go forth bearing the seal of his country, as his reward.

Those who have looked upon the West Point Academy simply as a school for military science, have overlooked the most important feature of its instruction. Military science is necessary and proper, but that is not all this institution affords. Here is taught that higher and better science :—" a glorious National spirit—with its extensive train of political consequences," of which General Knox spoke.

Here it is taught that there is something higher and better than fame—and that something is loyal duty. And it is pleasant to state at this time and place, that of all the graduates who have gone forth from here less than half a dozen have ever been known to violate their official trust, or honor, and only one has been known to shrink in the hottest fight.

My friends, I have prolonged this imperfect review of the history and spirit of our Military Academy, because transpiring events seem to warrant it. This Academy was not established simply for the benefit of its graduates, but more especially for the defence and preservation of the Union and republican institutions.

West Point was early called the " Gibraltar of America." Has it not become more than that ? Is it not the very heart of the nation, from which run the veins and arteries by which its life-blood of patriotism is kept in circulation, and purified ? From this Academy goes forth a class of gentlemen, trained not only in the science peculiar to their profession, but also schooled in all the elements of chivalrous manhood and that stern loyalty to their country's flag which subordinates all other considerations, wealth, friends, and life. And they are trained to obey, as well as to command, thus qualifying them in an eminent degree to instruct and lead the people at all times in their own defence.

We may not need a large standing army, but we do need, and must have, enough to protect us against all sudden dangers. We need it not only in times of war, but also in times of peace,

when the civil power finds itself too feeble to protect life and property, and is compelled to call to its assistance the stronger and surer military arm ; and it will be well for the people to study the spirit and intent of those who seek to cripple that arm.

It is true that our small army can only supply an insignificant quota upon emergencies of great magnitude, but it serves as a *grand centre* upon which to form the rallying masses in times of danger ; and hence the greater necessity for it, and for the Military Academy, from which has and will come "that adequate stock of military knowledge *for* emergencies" of which Washington spoke so decidedly.

And here let the chosen sons of our land imbibe the spirit of freedom these grounds distill ; here let them partake of the patriotism their history inspires ; and let the hallowed memories of those who founded that Academy, and those who sleep beneath these sods, mould their minds and infuse them with their stern loyalty, until, firm as those "rock-ribbed hills," they shall stand upon the watch-towers, and cry : "We know no North, we know no South, we know no East, we know no West ; we only know our country, our country's safety, and her honor!"

And let the American people guard and protect this great bulwark of the Republic with jealous care. Let them see to it that it is kept intact and generously supported ; for, so long as the people rally around their military and naval academies with generous hearts and watchful care, they make strong and secure the inner and outer walls of their defence.

And let them remember that the hand that strikes at West Point, whether in or out of Congress, strikes at the heart of the Republic, and is moved by the same spirit as that other hand that struck at the same safeguard, on that September day, 1780—*Benedict Arnold's!*

My friends, our armies have always been loyal and true to the people. They have always borne the flag safely through all conflicts, and brought it back untarnished. Officers and men have always fought it out where they were bid to fight ; they have been butchered in the tracks where they have been told to stand ; and they have stood together and died together, without success. And this standing together, and dying to-

gether for duty's sake, is the proof of the soldier's character! And the man who has stood firmly at his post of duty, and done his best, though falling without success, and even without a tear being shed over his grave, may still be the victor. He may go down thinking he leaves his honor and his fame to the uncertainties of an uncertain posterity; but, having kept his faith, finished his fight, and performed his duty well, sooner or later a certain posterity will come to do his name full justice.

And that, my friends, brings us to the central thought of this occasion. We are here, gentlemen of the army, for no holiday purpose. We, the citizens of America, have come to this hallowed ground to perform a most sacred duty, in paying our feeble tribute of tender respect to the memories of those whose ashes lie at our feet, and to those whose dust has mingled with Mother Earth elsewhere. We have come to honor your noble dead—our noble dead.

Our services are not for a class, but for all. Our tribute covers the entire history of the Republic. We embrace as our comrades all who have served our country faithfully in any war for the Union and its security.

And, comrades, we honor ourselves far more than the heroes at whose graves we stand!

Look about you! Read the epitaphs that record the deeds of those who rest in this beautiful camping-ground! What a company we are in! Here are some of the founders of the Military Academy; here are those who shed their blood in the war for independence; and here are those who have fallen in every war for the preservation and glory of the Union.

On the outer bastion of yonder fort stands the monument erected by the Cadets of '39 to the memory of Kosciusko. Fitting tribute on fitting ground, where he planted the first defence of this eagle's nest, *one hundred years ago*. Noble, generous, true-hearted Kosciusko! A lover of freedom, he left his home and country, and coming here, bringing his military training and skill, with his young life, laid them all at the feet of Washington. And to him, more than any other man, the country was indebted for its defensive works, which withstood the attacks of England and resulted in the Republic.

Washington, Kosciusko, and Lafayette—what names! And those three compatriots trod side by side over these consecrated sods.

On the Campus stands the hero of the Sixth Corps, still in his harness, looking over the plain. Sedgwick was one of those who rise above titles, and leave their names surrounded only by a halo of glory. His illustrious name, and his command, which he led victoriously over every field, became as one. To speak of one was to mention both. Beloved and honored by the men who never failed to respond to his rallying cry, until he fell in the terrible charges at Spottsylvania, as a token of their love and esteem, they raised his statue on the grounds which he honored by his life and his death.

On the mound near by stands a column, in honor of one of the first heroes of West Point—Colonel E. D. Wood. Any words of mine would mar the tribute recorded on the stone by the man who raised it—"A pupil of this Institution, he died an honor to his country. He was killed while leading a charge at the sortie of Fort Erie, September 17, 1814. He was exemplary as a Christian, and distinguished as a soldier. This monument was erected by his *friend* and Commander, Major-General Jacob Brown." And, let us add, stands a monument of honor to both.

Scattered among the numerous inhabitants of this silent city, are a goodly number who "faced to the front" on the country's battle-fields. There are John B. and Edward Holland, two brothers, in the same grave; Sergeant Cornelius O'Brien, and Thomas Sexton, and Peter Albers, and George W. Hall, with his signet, "For his Country," and John Maher, who fell at Fort Pickering. And there stands an old moss-covered stone that tells a remarkable story reaching back a century: "To the memory of Ensign Dominic Trant, of the Ninth Massachusetts Regiment," mustered out of mortal service, November 7, 1782, aged eighteen; and listen to what his comrades say of him: "He was a native of Cork, in Ireland, which place he quitted from a thirst for military glory, and an ardent desire to embrace the American cause. He died equally lamented, as he was beloved whilst living, by all who knew him." Close by, under a long granite stone, coffin in shape, are the ashes of one of his comrades, Roger Alden, a Captain in the army of the Revolution. Long indeed has been their sleep, and now we come to wake afresh their memories.

And casting the sunset shadows across those graves, stands

the monument of John Lillie, of Boston, one of the founders of our Military Academy. And just beyond sleeps Sergeant Thomas Rose. Under the beautiful Scotch marble column, lies Colonel J. L. Smith, son of the hero by that name, killed at Molino del Rey ;—a gallant soldier, as he showed himself, in the Shenandoah valley, at the capture of Island No. 10, and at the siege of Corinth, where he repulsed a sortie of the rebels, and a few days later, received his death-blow, while "Charging front, forward." Near him is another veteran of Florida, Lieutenant Edward D. Stockton.

And surrounding them are Major Wm. H. Shover, Captain Joseph H. Whipple, Major Wm. S. Henry, Major Wm. P. Bainbridge, Lieut Saml. J. Bransford, all of whom won the right to sleep here, by their valor in Florida and Mexico ; and Lieutenant S. P. Reed—who saw but the beginning of military life—and Major Edward B. Hunt, second in his class, a true soldier in the Rebellion, and a brilliant scholar, and bold delver into the mysteries of hidden forces, who was killed at Brooklyn while experimenting under water with his "Sea miner."

And there lies Colonel Alexander R. Thompson, another victim of the Florida savages. He served his country with great merit during the war of 1812, and was renowned for his indomitable courage, which showed itself in a thrilling degree at his death. At the head of his regiment, in the battle of Okee-cho-bee, after receiving two bullets, severely wounding him, which he utterly disregarded, he still kept his post giving his final order : "Keep steady, men ! Charge the hammock ! Remember the Regiment to which you belong," and led them to the desperate attack, when he received the third bullet, and fell without another word.

"In that lone grave without a name," in front of General Scott's monument, lies General Sylvanus Thayer ; one of those great engineers, who planted forts along our coasts, built strong walls to keep back the sea, and then hung out the beacon lights to guide our commerce safely to port. Distinguished on the battle-fields of 1812, and no less as Superintendent of West Point from 1817 to 1833, he came to be known as "The Father of the Academy," which he loved as a beautiful daughter. He also had the honor to represent his country in France on a special mission, while the allied armies

occupied it after the fall of the great Napoleon. And after a long and useful life, he came home to rest, with his illustrious sons about him.

And beyond is the long line of brilliant names, which adorn the pages of American History. There is General Duncan, whose name was a "battle-cry" in Florida and Mexico. Wherever tough work was to be done, there was Duncan and his battery, every gun of which he loved, as a mother loves her children.

And Captain O. H. P. Taylor, who served with distinction in Mexico, and later in New Mexico, where he was brevetted for gallantry, and finally killed in a battle with the Indians in Utah.

And Lieutenant Gaston, killed in the same war by the Indians.

And Colonel Benjamin J. Davis, a royal son of Mississippi, who stood faithfully by the flag, in the rebellion. He won his brevet for saving his command at Harper's Ferry, by gallantly cutting his way through the enemy's lines; and was killed at the head of the 8th New York Cavalry at Beverly Ford, in 1863.

And Colonel Alonzo H. Cushing, who went from the Academy to the battle-fields, in 1861, and fell at Gettysburg, gallantly holding an important position assigned him on that bloody field, until the enemy reached the muzzles of his guns, and struck him down at his post of honor.

And General John Buford, who was always in the thickest of the fight on thirty fields, and fought his way to the highest rank.

And General Wm. R. Terrill, a noble son of the Old Dominion, who entered the lists at Shiloh and fell at Perryville in '62.

And General Burton who, with the fragments of two companies, withstood a siege of thirty days at La Paz; and subsequently, at San Antonio, put a large number of Mexicans to flight, capturing their general.

And Major Silvery, and General T. S. Bowers, who entered the volunteer army in 1861 as a private, and by his gallantry rose to be a Brigadier-General in the Regular Army, and was with General Grant through the entire war, a trusted and efficient officer.

And Captains E. D. Phillips and Cornelius Hook, both of

whom rendered great service at Corinth and Vicksburg, where the hard and continued service wore out their young lives.

And Captain Alexander McRae, the dashing mounted rifleman. A son of North Carolina, he paid dearly for his steadfast loyalty during the Rebellion. Men of the North know very little what loyalty meant for sons of the South. Immediately upon the breaking out of hostilities, Captain McRae's father wrote to him ordering him to resign and come South, which the son promptly refused to do, saying his duty was to stand by his country's flag. To this the father replied, disowning him as a son, and in terms that must have nearly crushed his noble heart. Months later the father wrote him again, saying: "My son John was killed by the Yankees at the battle of Manassas, and now I have no son!" A bitter message in such an hour! Our noble hero hid his grief, and kept sternly at his post of duty until he was killed in the battle of Valverde, 1862, and let Americans pay honor to his loyal name. While a cadet in the Academy he was distinguished for his manly character, noble and commanding bearing, and by his classmates was proudly styled "The General;" and so universally was he beloved by them, that the largest donors towards his monument were the Southern men of his class, and all honor to them for it.

And there is General E. A. Hitchcock, worthy grandson of brave old Ethan Allen, who was a true soldier, and gave us the history of the burial of Dade and his command—honor enough for any man.

And General Robert Anderson, a name that must live with the Republic. A son of Kentucky, he gave his State lasting honor, by standing firmly at his post to receive the first shock of the Rebellion.

That silent march from Moultrie to Sumter, after which, while the commander knelt in prayer, the devoted little band raised the Stars and Stripes over the doomed fortress, under a midnight sky, is one of the indelible pictures in our country's history. And their standing there for two days, facing the storm of fire that rocked the continent and woke the fierce wrath of a mighty nation, will live forever as one of the most gallant deeds on record.

General Anderson was not only a soldier, but a thorough Christian and a scholar, and his works form an important fea-

ture in the instruction of this Academy and other like institutions. Born at the Soldiers' Retreat, in Kentucky, he was brought to this Soldiers' Retreat, where he rests from his labors, and his works do follow him.

And there lies Hartsuff, who shed his first blood in Florida, and received his crushing blow on the slaughter fields of Antietam, which unfitted him for further active service, and cut short a brilliant career.

And at the end, another! the dashing, defiant, gloriously heroic Custer, the beau-ideal of an American soldier. As we speak that name, what a scene flashes before our minds! To tell his story would be to narrate his hundred fights of the Rebellion. The emotions that spring up as we gaze upon that little mound, we dare not attempt to utter! A right loyal, golden-haired knight was he, who never knew defeat! He could stand and be butchered, but he could not, he would not, yield! Of him we may say, as it was said of Bayard the knight, he was "*le chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*," for he, too, "was the last as well as first in the fight," and he, too, "died under the trees with his face set towards the enemy!"

And here in the centre, flanked by his officers, is the great chieftain of them all, the conqueror of Mexico—Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott. His record forms an important thread in the history of our country, for he figured in the war of 1812, the northern Indian wars, in Florida, in Mexico, and the Rebellion. And his grandest achievement is told in one line: "From Vera Cruz to Mexico."

When the Rebellion came, his stalwart form was seen at the front, where he did his best to stay the tide of woe, but in vain. It was the inundation of an angry sea, and was bound to spend its force ere it would recede. It was a terrible experience to the great Captain, and nearly broke that mighty heart, when some of his gallant officers, who had served with such distinction under him in Florida and Mexico, drew their sabres against him, and, above all, against the old Flag, which he and they had borne so gloriously through so many hot fights and into the proud old Halls of the Montezumas!

Too old and too feeble to take the field again, he gave way to younger spirits, and, with a sad, sick heart, came to this retreat, the one place he loved best on earth, and calmly awaited

the final "Tattoo," which soon followed, when, "with his martial cloak around him," he went to his rest, with the mighty thunder of war for his funeral march!

Sleep, mighty Chieftain! 'neath this sod,
Where only patriots' feet have trod;
Rest, where thy country's heroes rest,
Thou proudest of thy country's best!

Comrades, our work is done! We have hung our wreaths of oak, laurel, and even wild flowers and weeds, upon the urns of our illustrious heroes! We have scattered over their ashes the emblems of peace, joy, and purity; and we have attempted in a feeble manner to recount some of their glorious deeds, and noble virtues. And, as we leave, let us take with us the spirit of this place; let us catch the inspiration flowing from the histories and associations that cluster around this memorable spot, that we too may stand true to duty, and be ready and able at all times to give the patriot's cry: "My country, may she always be right! but, right or wrong, still my country!"

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